LIS 525

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Professional Development Essay

I remember taking an assessment quiz Chris Hollister administered the first day of LIS 518 References Sources and Services. I was surprised at how little I knew about reference and I started to sweat when I realized that I was also the oldest person in the room and was also likely to be the last person to finish the quiz. I quickly guessed at the last few questions and handed in the quiz leaving two other students behind as I triumphed in not being the oldest and the slowest in the class. I’ve come a long way since then; I’d probably ace that quiz and I’m no longer self-conscious about starting a career at my age. I can assess my strengths and my weaknesses as they relate to the professional position of library media specialist but I don’t pretend to understand all the intricacies of this job. That understanding will only come with time, actual professional experience, and a professional development plan.

My innate strengths that will contribute to my success as a library media specialist include my love of learning and my desire to organize and categorize the world around me. I possess an actual love for learning and I believe that through that passion I will be able to instill that same love in students. I know that my creative nature will assist me in keeping instruction lively and interesting. My background in design has always been helpful in creating stimulating presentations both digital and physical. This desire to organize information and objects in interesting and attractive ways will serve me in my endeavors to create an environment that inspires creative thinking and motivates student enthusiasm about the library media center and its resources.

My experiential strengths include my management and leadership skills as a small business owner and the practical experience gained during course projects and practicums. I’ve honed my management and leadership skills over the course of the last ten years as a local restaurant owner. There is no substitute for experience and mine will give me a scaffold for those aspects of the job that require management of the physical LMC, its daily operations, and the personnel within. The practical management experience I received during my practicums will also aid me when I have a library of my own to run. I realize that each school and LMC are unique and that nothing can prepare you completely for taking over the reins as SLMS but the practical experience I have had will ensure that I have some background knowledge from which to source answers.

My weaknesses, as they relate to the professional position of library media specialist, stem from a lack of experience in a number of categories. I’ve spent time teaching but I don’t believe that makes me a teacher. I’ve collaborated with others but I don’t believe that means I have developed an actual strength in collaborative planning. While I’ve faced some of the challenges a media specialist faces on the job, mine have mostly been in theory or on paper. I’ve never faced conflict with a student, parent, teacher, or administrator in relation to the library profession. I understand many issues surrounding copyright and fair use but I hardly feel like an authority on those matters. I worry about being able to keep up with the demands and expectations of the job, especially as I read the blogs of such super-librarians as Joyce Valenza, Gywneth A. Jones, and Tiffany Whitehead. Then I remember that those blogs are meant to inform and inspire and that when I am hired as a SLMS, I will use all the resources I have gathered in the past two years to help me begin my journey.